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Ambleside.

May 1920

My dear *Children*

It is eight years since I had an opportunity of writing to each of you and to all of you as a body. Let me repeat the welcome that you received at Winchester in the words of Isaak Walton, that wise fisherman who gathered wisdom while he waited for the trout to rise:-

"I will tell you, Scholar, I have heard a grave Divine say that God has two dwellings: one in Heaven; and the other in a meek and thankful heart. Which Almighty God grant to me, and to my honest Scholar: and so you are welcome."

Some of you may still have the card with this motto among your treasures, but all of you, I know, have brought the meek and thankful heart that Isaak Walton desired for himself and his Scholar: meek, because we shall be thinking about great persons in a place touched with the magic of holy and serviceable lives; about the work in stone and on parchment of famous men and women of old and of the wonders of sea and sky and earth, of tales told by the very rocks, all uniting in a chorus:- "Great and marvellous are thy works and they ought to be had in remembrance."

Let us remember that the works of men indirectly, and the

work of Nature, directly, are the great and marvellous works of God. Thinking of these things, we shall be meek and very ready to learn, and so we shall find out that "the meek shall inherit the earth," for those things that we love and delight in are far more truly ours than the things, so easily spoilt, which money can buy.

A famous schoolmaster was asked by his boys to explain that saying of our Lord's about the meek, and he said,-

"Napoleon thought he inherited the earth by force of arms, and he died on Elba. Wordsworth had no such proud thoughts, but he did inherit the earth; all the Lake country and much of the world besides belongs to him still."

Being rich in these great things we shall be gentle and generous, and I am very sure you all have thankful hearts, thankful for Whitby and all that it means and will mean for all your lives; very thankful that God has set us in a world so full of beauty and joy; thankful to our kind and hospitable Whitby friends; thankful to the beloved friends who have brought you here, and tenderly thankful, I know, to those other kind friends who have taken great delight in planning and arranging for this wonderful week. That is how people writing to me about Whitby describe the Winchester Gathering, "that wonderful week".

How I wish I could be with you to share all your joys and to see your dear faces! - the more so, because you have made me

quite intimate with you in those examination papers which give me happy weeks; because I can see how happy you were in writing them, and what great joy you have in that knowledge, some of which you pour out in your papers.

I have news to tell you which will I think give you a great deal of pleasure. Nobody can enjoy a treat by himself; he wants other boys and girls to share it with him, and the bigger the treat the more friends he would have to share it. I know you think of the P.U.S. work as a treat. I get letters every day to tell me how much So-and-so enjoys his or her lessons, and, though I cannot see you to-day, I know what happy faces you carry. I wonder do you know what gives happy faces to children and grown-ups? Just this, people look happy when they have nice things to think about, and you have so many delightfully interesting things to occupy your minds that I have never seen an unhappy-looking P.U.S. Scholar.

When we are happy we long to make other people so too; therefore I know you will be delighted to know that thousands and thousands of children have joined the school since the Winchester days, and, what is better than all, many of them are in elementary schools; these dear children too wander in the woods with Titania and Oberon, pitch their tents on the plains of Palestine with King Richard, see the wonders of the Parthenon, and lift up their eyes to the hills and to the stars. Some of them, with their teachers

are, as you know, present at this Gathering, sharing in the generous welcome given to us by all our kind friends in Whitby and all of you together have your thoughts full of great and beautiful things, and mean to learn and be of use in God's wonderful world.

I wonder, would you like to add to your prayers at night, "God bless all children, parents and teachers in the P.U.S."

As you are by the seaside I should like to give you a verse to think of which I like very much. You recollect about that storm at sea when our Lord was asleep upon a pillow; this is what Keble says of it:-

"Well, if we pray till Thou awake!
A word, a glance from Thee
Soft silence in the soul can make,
Calm peace upon the sea."

I must not keep you from other pleasures by writing too long a letter, so I shall only add my very loving greetings to each of you.

Always your very affectionate friend,

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

Liberal Education
Sampson
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Seal Hall
Amblecote
Jan 4th 1917

My dear "Bairns!"

It will be delightful to see you
at Easter, if, indeed, considering the
present restrictions on travelling, you
see your way to undertake what must
be for many of you a long & difficult
journey.

Should you come, I suppose it
will be as before; you will arrive on
Thursday, the ^{APRIL 18th 12th} ~~14th 12th~~; meet in the
Classroom here on the Friday, & on the
Saturday morning. We shall manage
to put ourselves somewhere (with a
great deal of pleasure), and in the
evening you will come here I hope, to
an 'At Home', just an occasion for

talking & making friends, & for giving me the pleasure of seeing the dear faces once more.

On the Sunday you usually come here to early dinner & tea, & some of you might care to join what you used to call "Meditations".

Then, on Monday ^{morning} I wonder shall you have an Association Meeting which you would like the present-students ^{in the big classroom} to attend? & in the evening, I think they have it in view to produce a play for you, unless you have other plans.

But none of this is fixed, so please make any changes that occur to you, being very sure that the pleasure of seeing you, & the hope that the Conference may be a very happy (one whose memory will cheer us all in these dark & anxious days), is what we care most about.

I shall be particularly glad of an opportunity
to tell you of the great national work which
has come to us in these War days. No
doubt - you have all heard something of the
introduction of R.U.S. work into elementary
schools, but you can hardly without seeing
it, understand the avidity ^{shown} by both
teachers & children, nor the cordial way
in which H. M. Inspectors & educational
authorities give their help; in Bradford
the Educational Committee is prepared
to advance a two years' allowance in
each school for books & stationery, in
order that teachers may get the necessary
books.

Now, last summer (in South Wales)
when Miss Parrish, Miss Kitching & I talked
over a 'plan of campaign', we very justly
thought of the old students; and, in
some cases, the parents of ~~the~~ your children
would probably be School Managers or
Members of Council, & if not, would be able

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~~would be able~~ to reach the Inspectors or
the Directors of Education, or both.

Suppose the first thing would be for
you to get your "parents" interested in an
effort which should do much for the
happiness of our country, & should give
all children many interests & resources,
& should help to ease labour troubles
by giving the people something besides
their grievances to think of. This is the
first thing, & once you have secured this
interest, I know Miss Parish will give
you pamphlets with which to bombard
people with various advice & instructions.

Give the principal people to get
hold of are the teachers, & I think that
any one who sees her way to do something
had better ask Miss Parish for the three pamphlets
& study them very carefully before
beginning so that they be ready to
answer any questions.

Still hoping to see you, ever yours, and most sincerely
yours always affectionately friend
Charles M. Nelson

1919? 1920?

It is very delightful to me to welcome you
 here once more after the searching days through
 which we have all passed. I think too the occasion
 is rather a solemn one. I suppose you ^{will} feel
 that you received your vocation when first
 you made up your mind to enter your College,
 & nobly you have as a body responded to the call,
 every one of you has good & faithful work
 to her name; you have been wonderfully loyal,
 faithful, united, enthusiastic; you have won
 a good name for yourselves at the College, so much
 so that the demand for H.P. students is
 excessive, many times beyond the supply,
 & the openings seem to be inexhaustible.

But since you were last here, a very great
 vocation has come to us all. I see that one of your
 discussions is to be on the ? of how to keep up
 to date. Now the curious thing that has happened
 to us is that our achievement goes beyond the
 people's aspirations, so that we are always outstripping
 in advance. By the good hand of our God upon
 us, certain secrets ^{inherent} as to the ^{inherent} behavior of mind have been
 discovered to us (or to me) which call us to a great vocation

or give us a great risk in the education of
the future. I need not say that this
is no credit to us; it is in the usual
way of Providence to work with the weak things
of the earth, but I think it will but move us
to walk softly, to go reverently. if we realized
if we realized that we are deliberately called
to do that which has not hitherto been done
in the world. It remembers the feet of the man
who laid unceremonious hands upon the ark,
— we, an insignificant body of by ones
means important people, are permitted to
bear the ark of promises into the future.

Promises of what? we ask, it is not easy
to put the answers into words. The mother of
a little girl in the practicing school wrote the other
day to bless us for her — her child:
when she was quite little she announced that
she thought it a great waste of time to be a
child; why was she not born grown up so that
she could do things? And the slender years of
her life have been spent in the discontent that comes
of monotony & ^{unhealthy} ^{exaggerated} ^{ambition} ^{to} ^{be} ^{grown} ^{up} ^{and} ^{do} ^{things}. After a time or two, she is a real
child, with my hope, expectation & the ever-
renewing

of knowledge
 to recognise the ailment under which the child
 suffered; we know that every human being who is
 not duly & regularly fed goes listless & faint
 with mind - hunger. Today, thousands of
 children are picking themselves up, bright of eye
 & happy of countenance, because they are
 being well fed. Nor is it only children to
 whom due nourishment is vital; all
 persons are healthy-minded in proportion
 as their minds are fed; we remember what
 happened to the horse that was swept & starved,
 & we know of our own experience of anxiety,
 discontent, impurity, vanity, ill-humour &
 what not - much in state possession of the
 empty mind. Therefore it is not only
 in the schoolroom we make our appeal; we urge
 - do good work in continuation schools, &
 among other adult persons who perceive in
 themselves the necessity to be fed: But is, we
 know that the desultory reading of our food
 books nourishes not more than the smell of
 a good dinner in the cooking. There is an
 art of knowing what we must require